



**COUNTY OF LOUDOUN
PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
REFERRAL MEMORANDUM**

To: Marchant Scheider, Project Manager, Planning Department **(MSC #62)**
From:  Brian G. Fuller, Park Planner, Facilities Planning and Development
(MSC #78)
Through:  Mark A. Novak, Chief Park Planner, Facilities Planning and Development
CC: Diane Ryburn, Director
Steve Torpy, Assistant Director
Su Webb, Chairman, PROS Board, Catocin District
Michael G. Capretti, PROS Board, Broad Run District
Robert C. Wright, PROS Board, Open Space Member
James E. O'Connor, PROS Board, Open Space Member
Date: November 24, 2009



Subject: Loudoun Water – Water Storage Facility
SPEX 2009-0020 & CMPT 2009-0006 (2nd Submission)
Election District: Broad Run **Sub Planning Area:** Ashburn
MCPI #: 114-25-6156

BACKGROUND and ANALYSIS:

The Property is located on the west side of Route 659 (Belmont Ridge Road), on the east bank of the Goose Creek, and is on the north side of the Washington & Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail in the Broad Run District. The Property consists of approximately 33.77 acres within the Suburban Policy Area, and is zoned MR-HI (Mineral Resources – Heavy Industrial). The Property is owned by the Luck Stone Corporation for use as “Quarry A” in the Leesburg Plant mining operation, an existing diabase rock quarry.

Luck Stone Corporation has recently partnered with Loudoun Water to complete future expansion plans for public water in central Loudoun County. Luck Stone has purchased several parcels of land west of Goose Creek, south of their proposed expansion quarry. These parcels will provide future quarry operations for generations and allow the reclamation process on the older quarries to begin.

Loudoun Water (formally LCSA) has been informally planning for future use of the quarries for the last 20 years. They purchased a property along the Potomac River near the Leesburg water treatment plant in 1993, and began a more formal planning process for water intake and impoundment in 2001. “Quarry A” has been identified as

the first “water bank” to hold up to one billion gallons of raw water to be pumped from the Potomac River via a future waterline running along the large transcontinental power lines. This banked water would be used during drought/low water and/or unsuitable intake periods in the Potomac River. All other times, the water line would serve directly to a future water treatment plant along Goose Creek, just north of the Dulles Greenway on Luck Stone property. Luck Stone and Loudoun Water have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow for water banking in Quarries A and B. This plan was adopted by the Loudoun Water Board in December 2008 after public input.

Currently, Loudoun Water purchases all of its water from Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax. This new intake plant, water treatment plant, and water banks would allow them reduce dependency on purchased water. Loudoun Water will maintain a permanent easement for the water lines and banks on Luck Stone property. Loudoun Water has previously committed to the preservation of the 300’ buffer along Goose Creek, and states that water banking does not have any real environmental impact. Quarries tend to be “self-sealing” and there should not be any interaction with Goose Creek or the groundwater table.

POLICY:

The site is governed under the land use policies in the Revised General Plan. The subject sites are located within the Ashburn Subarea of the Suburban Policy Area. The Planned Land Use Map adopted with the Revised General Plan designates that the subject site is planned for Industrial uses.

Under the Revised General Plan, quarries are considered Heavy Industrial uses. Furthermore, under the Green Infrastructure policies, *“The County will facilitate the long-range planning of quarry sites, including setting aside sufficient land for extraction and creating an environment that will be attractive for future uses once the quarrying use is no longer viable.”*

COMMENTS:

With respect to Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) we offer the following comments and recommendations:

1. PRCS is developing a system of interconnected linear parks along the County’s Stream Valley Corridors. This is consistent with the Greenways and Trail Policies of the Revised General Plan, Policy 1 (p. 5-39): *“Greenways include areas along rivers and streams that are often ideal for trails”*. Policy 4 (p. 5-40): *“The County will seek through purchase, proffer, density transfer, donation or*

open-space easement, the preservation of greenways and the development of trails". Parks, Recreation and Community Services Policies, Policy 3 (p. 3-15): "The County encourages the contiguous development of regional linear parks, trail, and natural open space corridors to provide pedestrian links and preserve environmental and aesthetic resources." In previous verbal discussions, Luck Stone Corporation has been willing to provide trail connections along Goose Creek, and Staff hopes this proposal will not affect these prior commitments.

As a Condition of Approval, PRCS requests that the Applicant consider dedicating the proposed area for the "300-foot Permanent Conservation Easement" to the County for the purposes of a linear park along Goose Creek. This project property is vital for extending a trail along Goose Creek to connect with established portions of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail and its trailhead at Keep Loudoun Beautiful Park downstream.

Should the Applicant be unwilling to dedicate the property, PRCS requests a condition that the Applicant construct a 4-foot wide natural trail within a 30-foot wide public access easement along Goose Creek within the 300-foot buffer, to be field located by PRCS Staff, similar to the Conditions approved with Play to Win Sports (SPEX 2007-0056). In addition, PRCS requests that the Applicant condition to provide pedestrian connections from the W&OD Trail.

Applicant Response: *The area of the 300 foot buffer which is not actually within the quarry pit, is outside of the special exception area and not under control of the Applicant for dedication or trail construction purposes.*

Issue Status: Acknowledged. PRCS is coordinating with the Owner (Luck Stone) on this issue in other land development applications.

2. The Applicant states that the quarry *"will provide a predominant visual element that can be enjoyed by pedestrians and bicyclists who travel along the W&OD Trail."* PRCS recommended coordinating with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) to provide a wayside (benches, etc.) along the W&OD Trail adjacent to the quarry with interpretive signage of the quarry history and water impoundment purpose and process.

Applicant Response: *The Applicant will coordinate with Luck Stone Corporation and public agencies if a decision is made by others to provide overlooks or signage in the vicinity of the quarry. However, property beyond the quarry rim is not part of the special exception application area. Further, the Applicant cannot commit to provide such improvements on property that it does not own. The statement of justification originally indicated that the quarry will provide a predominant visual element that can be enjoyed from the trail. More detailed*

investigation of future water storage plans revealed that the ultimate water level of the storage facility will be substantially lower than the top of the quarry rim, and this combined with existing vegetation effectively screens the proposed use from the W&OD Trail.

Issue Status: Acknowledged.

3. Staff requests the opportunity to explore potential recreational opportunities, within and around the reclaimed quarry, with the Applicant.

Applicant Response: *The use of Quarry A for water storage does not lend itself to public access, whether visual or physical. The water storage elevation with the quarry pit is anticipated to be over twenty feet below the rim of the quarry and at least sixty feet below the elevation of the W&OD Trail. Quarry walls are steep and the proposed 10 foot tall barbed wire fence at the quarry rim is proposed for the purpose of preventing public access for both safety and security reasons. Additionally, other agency comments indicate a desire to retain existing trees and understory vegetation along the boundary of the W&OD Trail, further limiting visual access to the quarry. The statement of justification has been corrected to recognize that existing vegetation between the water storage area and the W&OD Trail is to remain and will therefore limit visual access from the W&OD Trail. The use of a quarry for water storage purposes differs greatly from a water reservoir where steep slopes are not such an issue, where an actual shoreline exists and access to the water by the public may be much easier and safer.*

Issue Status: Acknowledged. PRCS understands the Applicant's concern over public safety and security in this specific location. However, PRCS is constantly looking for partnership opportunities to provide Loudoun citizens with public access to recreational water sources. There many examples across the country of quarry pit restoration for public recreational purposes, and Staff recommends that the Applicant consider this type of opportunity in future projects.

4. Please add a note to the Cover Sheet to reference the previously-approved Special Exception(s), including SPEX 1990-0019 and SPEX 1999-0006.

Applicant Response: *The applications did not involve Quarry A. They were associated with the other quarries operated by Luck Stone in the area. The only zoning action applicable to this property is a special permit approval in 1971. When the special exception for water storage becomes active, the quarrying activity will have ceased and thus, the 1971 permit will null and void.*

Issue Status: Acknowledged.

CONCLUSION:

Staff has reviewed the Applicant's responses, and offers no further objection to the approval of this application as presented.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these comments, please do not hesitate to contact me personally via phone at 571-258-3251, or via e-mail at brian.fuller@loudoun.gov. You may also contact Mark Novak via phone at 703-737-8992, or via e-mail at mark.novak@loudoun.gov. I look forward to attending any meetings or work sessions to offer PRCS support, or to be notified of any further information regarding this project.